OF

The Happiness of the Saints in Heaven

A

SERMON

Preached before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITEHALL

October 10, [illegible]

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A SERMON Preached before the QUEEN AT WHITE-HALL, *October* 12. 1690.

COLOS. I. 12.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.

ALthough the greateſt part of the numerous Off-ſpring, which hath hitherto proceeded from *Adam*'s loins, be departed out of this life, and are ſeen no

more among us; yet we muſt not therefore think that they are ceaſed to be, or to live: For ſtill their Souls are all as really alive in the other World, as we are now in this. And as it is with us here, that ſome live ill, and others well: So it is with them too; only in an higher degree. For ſome, and as we may have juſt cauſe to fear, the greateſt part of them live with the Fiends of Hell in the infernal pit, where they have no light, nothing but darkneſs and horrour to the utmoſt extremity round about them: where they are always weeping and wailing and gnaſhing their teeth, fretting and tormenting themſelves at the remembrance of their former ſins and follies: where, as Chriſt himſelf hath told us, *The worm dyeth not, and the fire is not quenched*: that is, their Conſciences like greedy and inſatiable worms are always gnawing, and the fire of God's wrath is continually burning in their Breaſts, never to be quenched or abated. They cannot forbear thinking of what they have done, though every thought cuts them to their very hearts, and ſeems ready to ſplit them in ſunder.

Mar. 9. 44.

They cannot forbear looking upon God, although they can ſee nothing in him but the

wrath

wrath and anger which they themſelves have kindled; which ſo incenſes and enrageth their minds, that they are all in a flame with fury and indignation at themſelves for it. By which means they are continually, as it were, upon a wrack, diſtorted, afflicted, diſtracted, confounded; hurried about from place to place, but can find no reſt, no quiet; every thing is uneaſie and troubleſome to them: yea they are a burden to themſelves, they cannot endure themſelves, but wiſh ten thouſand times they had been better, or had never been at all, or could ceaſe to be, or could be any thing but what they are. But all in vain. And which is worſt of all, they do not only ſuffer the extremity of pain and anguiſh at preſent, but they can ſee no end of it: yea they ſee there will be no end at all, being fully aſſured that this muſt be their portion for ever.

Whereas on the other ſide, there are others, who are not only free from all the miſeries and torments which thoſe poor creatures undergo, but always live in Heaven, in light, and love, and joy, and peace, and glory, the higheſt that they are able to imagine or deſire; being brisk and lively, chearfull and pleaſant, holy and happy all over. And that too (as

we:

we ſhall ſee more preſently) not only now and then, but continually; nor for ſome time only, but to all eternity.

Now we who are ſtill upon Earth, are as yet in neither of theſe ſtates, neither ſo extremely miſerable as the firſt are, nor ſo perfectly happy as thoſe are we ſpake of laſt: but, as it were, in the middle between both. But ſo ſoon as ever we depart out of this life, we ſhall be immediately in one of them, as certainly as we are now here. And I do not queſtion but that you all hope for and deſire the latter, even to live with thoſe bleſſed Souls which enjoy perpetual reſt and felicity in the other world: And that one great end of your coming hither at this time, is to learn what you muſt do in order to it. And verily ye do well to take all opportunities you can get, of being aſſiſted and directed in it. For it is a great thing that you propoſe to your ſelves, which can never be attained without much care and pains about it. And you are not certain how long time you have to doe it in, but moſt certain it is not very long. But bleſſed be God, you are all as yet in a capacity of obtaining it, and it is your own fault if any of you ſhall happen to miſs of it. For Almighty

mighty God plainly ſhews how deſirous he is to have you live with him, and ſo be happy in the other world, in that he is ſtill pleaſed to afford you all the means that he hath appointed for that purpoſe: Witneſs your meeting together here at this time, to joyn together in Prayer to his Divine Goodneſs for his aſſiſtance in the purſuit of it; and to be put in mind of the courſe and method which you are to take for the accompliſhment of ſo great and good an end. Concerning which therefore I ſhall give you the beſt and plaineſt directions I can from the words which I have now read. In which we may obſerve,

I. What kind of perſons they are, who are or ſhall be happy in the other world; they are *Saints.*

II. The happineſs they enjoy there, here call'd *the inheritance of the Saints in light.*

III. They who deſire to enjoy that happineſs muſt be duly qualified for it, or as it is here expreſſed, *made meet to be partakers of it.*

IV. All who are ſo qualified, muſt aſcribe it wholly unto God, and give him thanks for it, as we ſee here S. *Paul* doth, *Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.*

First

First therefore as to the perſons who live ſo happily in the other world, they are here called *Saints.* It is the inheritance of the Saints, of all the Saints and of them only. It is proper and peculiar to them, ſo that none elſe have any right or title to it, nor can ever have any part or portion in it. And that there is ſuch a company and ſociety of men in the world, which are truly called Saints, cannot be denied by any Chriſtian; it being one of the Articles of our Creed, wherein we profeſs to believe, there is a *Communion of Saints.* And unleſs we be of that Communion, we can never partake of the inheritance of the Saints.

But the great queſtion is, what it is to be a Saint? or who may be truly and properly called *Saints*, men of holineſs, or holy men, as the word ſignifies? But this we can never fully underſtand, unleſs we firſt ſtate the true notion of Sanctity or Holineſs, from whence they are ſo called. Now Holineſs or Sanctity in its higheſt perfection, is one of the perfections of God himſelf, who often calls himſelf *The holy one of Iſrael*, and ſometimes abſolutely, *the holy one.* And as he ſometimes ſwears by himſelf, at other times he ſwears by his holineſs: whereby he gives us to underſtand, that he

Pſal. 89. 35. Amos 4. 2.

he himſelf is holineſs, or, which is all one, Holineſs is himſelf, his own divine Nature or Eſſence. And that's the reaſon why they who partake *of his holineſs*, are ſaid to partake *of his divine nature.* Heb. 12. 10. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

And hence it is, that when the holy Angels would celebrate the praiſes of the moſt high God in the higheſt manner they can, they cry, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* Iſa. 6. 3. Rev. 4. 8. And hence alſo it is, that when God deſigned to make Man after his own image, as like him as a creature could be, he made him perfectly holy. And now that this image is defaced in us, if it be reſtored again to any man, ſo that he becomes a new man, he is ſaid to be created after God, that is, after the likeneſs of God, *in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* Epheſ. 4. 24. So that this is the great perfection, wherein we were at firſt made, and ought again to become like to God our Maker, who therefore commands us to be holy as he is holy. *As he who hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation.* 1 Pet. 1. 15. From whence it appears, that though we cannot be holy in the ſame meaſure as God is, who is ſo without and beyond all meaſure; yet we ſhould be ſo after the ſame manner as he is,

or rather our holineſs ſhould be of the ſame kind or nature with his, and as like it, as it is poſſible for it to be.

Hence therefore as Holineſs, when attributed to God, denotes the purity and excellency of his divine nature, whereby he is exalted above all things elſe: ſo when attributed to men, it ſignifies the purity and excellency of their nature, whereby they are refined and raiſed up above the reſt of mankind. This the Apoſtle teacheth us, where he oppoſeth holineſs to uncleanneſs, ſaying, *God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs.* And *David*, where he calls the Saints that are upon earth, *the excellent*; implying, that Saints as ſuch, excell all other perſons, by reaſon of their holineſs, that is the higheſt excellency which their nature is capable of. Which therefore doth not conſiſt in any particular Acts or Habits either of the ſoul or body, or both together, but in the rectitude or due temperament of our nature in general. And indeed Holineſs, properly ſo called, is nothing elſe, but that pure and excellent frame or diſpoſition of the whole man, whereby all the faculties of the ſoul and members of the body, are reduced to their primitive conſtitution, and become

1 Theſſ. 4. 7.

Pſal. 16. 3.

come ſuch as God at firſt made, and would ſtill have them to be; exerting themſelves in their reſpective places and offices, according to thoſe rules which he hath ſet them. So that to our perfecting Holineſs, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, in the fear of God, there is required a right and clear underſtanding, a ſound judgment, a pure heart, an obedient will, a good conſcience, and regular affections, placed every one upon its proper objects in a due manner. And whereſoever the Soul (if I may ſo ſpeak) is thus all of a-piece, all over ſuch as God would have it to be, and ſo agreeable to his divine will, there is true holineſs, and ſuch a one may be truly ſaid to be holy, yea to be holy as God is holy, as being pure and excellent according to his finite capacity, as God himſelf is in his infinite perfections.

Now the true notion of holineſs or ſanctity being thus briefly ſtated, we may eaſily underſtand what kind of perſons thoſe be, which are here called *Saints*. For in order to a man's being a true Saint, He muſt firſt have ſo much knowledge of God and Chriſt, as is neceſſary to the poſſeſſing of his mind with a due ſenſe of his divine Majeſty, and with right apprehenſions of the great myſtery of our Salva-

tion by Jeſus Chriſt. He muſt have a ſound judgment in all things, eſpecially in the fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and in all the neceſſary duties required in the Goſpel. He muſt have a pure and ſincere heart, in believing all thoſe Articles as revealed, and in performing all ſuch duties as required by God. He muſt have a good conſcience, a conſcience void of all offence both towards God and towards men. He muſt have a pliable and obedient will, ready upon all occaſions to chuſe whatſoever his underſtanding, rightly informed, dictates to be good, and to refuſe whatſoever he apprehends to be evil. He muſt keep his affections all in their proper order, fixed conſtantly upon ſuch objects which they were at firſt fitted and deſigned for. He muſt hate, abhor, and ſhun all manner of ſin, upon that account only becauſe it is ſin, or the tranſgreſſion of God's law, and be heartily troubled that he was ever guilty of it. He muſt love God with all his heart and ſoul, and ſo above all things in the world beſides. He muſt bear no grudg, hatred, malice, or ill-will againſt any perſon upon earth, but love his neighbour as himſelf. He muſt hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, and deſire nothing

thing ſo much as to ſerve and pleaſe God, and ſo to have his love and favour, whatſoever it coſts him. He muſt not fear them which can kill the body, but him only who is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in Hell. He muſt truſt in the Lord with all his heart, and ſupport himſelf under all the circumſtances and occurrences of this life, with an humble confidence of his goodneſs and mercy in Jeſus Chriſt. He muſt rejoyce in the Lord always, both when he hath and when he hath not any thing elſe to rejoyce in. He muſt be ſober and temperate, meek and humble, gentle and peaceable, faithfull to his word, true to his friend, loving to his enemy, charitable to the poor, kind and mercifull, and juſt to all. In brief, he muſt be *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

And that he may be ſure of. For he who hath attained to ſuch an excellent temper as this is, is certainly a real and true Saint, and therefore ſhall as certainly partake of that tranſcendent happineſs, which is here called *the Inheritance of the Saints in light.* It is called an *Inheritance*, or, as the word ſignifies alſo, a *lot*, in alluſion to that type of Heaven, the land of

of *Canaan*, which was divided among all the Children of *Iſrael* by lot, and is all along in the Old Teſtament called their Inheritance. And ſo certainly is Heaven in a proper and literal ſenſe, the Inheritance of the Saints. For they being all regenerate and born again of God, are properly his Children, and as the Apoſtle rightly argues, *If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Chriſt.* So that all the Saints or Sons of God, in whatſoever age or place they were born again from the beginning to the end of the world, they are all co-heirs, and ſo have an equal right and title to this Inheritance; not only to ſome part of it, but to the whole, and all and every one of them equally poſſeſs it all. It is not like an earthly inheritance, that is divided among the co-heirs, ſome taking one part of it and ſome another: But every one that hath any ſhare in this heavenly inheritance, enjoys it all himſelf, as much as if he was the ſole heir, and there were none elſe to partake of it but himſelf.

Rom. 8. 17.

Neither are the Saints joynt-heirs only with one another, but, as the Apoſtle there ſpeaks, with Chriſt himſelf. And if ſo, their inheritance muſt needs be very large, For

Chriſt

Chriſt is appointed heir of all things. And if they be joynt-heirs with him, as be ſure they are, every one of them muſt inherit all things too as he doth. And ſo be ſure they do. For God himſelf aſſerts it, ſaying, *He that overcometh, ſhall inherit all things: And I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son.* Heb. 1. 2. Rev. 21. 7.

Where we may obſerve both the vaſt extent of this inheritance of the Saints, and likewiſe the reaſon of it. As to its extent, it is not confined to a Pariſh, or County, or Kingdom upon Earth, no, not to the whole Earth, nor to the Moon nor Sun, nor to any Star, nor to all the Stars of Heaven, nor to the whole Heavens where they are, nor yet to the greateſt part of the Creation, but extends it ſelf to the whole. For *they inherit all things*; all things that are good or amiable, all things that are pleaſing or delightſome, all things that are neceſſary or convenient for them. All things they can deſire or hope for, all things they can love or take comfort in, all things that can any way contribute to their happineſs: As all things in the whole world ſhall do one way or other.

For even while they are upon Earth, all things work together for their good, how much

much more when they come to Heaven? Where they ſhall clearly ſee, how all things that ever happened to them through the whole courſe of their lives, concurred to bring them thither: and ſo will be matter of joy and comfort to them, when they are there. By which means, they will then take pleaſure, not only in all the devotions, alms, and good works, they ever performed, but likewiſe in all the loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, pains, ſickneſſes, and troubles of all ſorts that ever befell them. Yea and in all things, that God ever made, or did, or ſuffered to be done in the world. For all things are theirs, even while they are here below, as St. *Paul* aſſures the
1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. Saints at *Corinth*, ſaying, *All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours.* All things are ſettled upon them at their new-birth, and when they come to full age, that is, as ſoon as they get to Heaven, they will have the actual poſſeſſion of all things, and then muſt needs enjoy whatſoever any thing in the world can afford them. And what is there in the world, but what affords the Saints in Heaven ſomething to delight and pleaſe them? The Heaven of Heavens

Heavens affords them moſt commodious and pleaſant Manſions. All the holy Angels there afford them their moſt agreeable company and converſation. All the Devils and damned in Hell afford them matter of praiſe and thankfulneſs to God, that they are not there. All the glorious lights in the firmament, afford them a moſt delicious proſpect. In ſhort, All the Animals, and Plants, and Earths, and Stones, and Metals, and Minerals, and whatſoever elſe God ever made, either in Heaven or Earth, afford them a clear and perfect view of his divine perfections, which cannot but affect their hearts with the higheſt tranſports of joy and wonder.

Thus doth every Saint in Heaven inherit all things All things are his. And it is no marvail, for God himſelf is his. As it follows in the place before quoted, *He ſhall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son. He ſhall be my Son,* that is the reaſon he is an heir; *I will be his God,* that's the reaſon that he inherits all things For he who hath him that hath all things, cannot but have all things in him. Yea infinitely more than all things elſe; all things that God hath made being in a manner nothing in compariſon of

him that made them. Who therefore to complete the happineſs of his Saints, doth not only give them all he hath, but even himſelf too, ſaying, *I will be their God*, or rather, as the words ſignifie, I *will be God to them.* By virtue of which promiſe they enjoy not only whatſoever God hath made or done, but likewiſe whatſoever he is, even all thoſe infinite, eternal, incomprehenſible Perfections which are concentred in him.

But here I muſt confeſs my ſelf at a loſs, not knowing how to conceive, much leſs to expreſs either how the Saints in heaven enjoy God, or how great an happineſs that is to them? Only in general we know they ſee
1 Cor. 13. 12. God face to face, as not only St. *Paul*, but likewiſe St. *John* aquaints us, ſaying, *Beloved,*
1 Joh. 3 2. *now we are the Sons of God: And it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be. But we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

From whence it is evident, that they ſee God, not only as manifeſting himſelf in his creatures, but as he is in himſelf. Which bleſſed ſight, muſt needs fill them with the higheſt joys their finite nature is able to bear. To ſee Wiſedom, and Power, and Greatneſs, and Goodneſs, and Juſtice,

Juſtice, and Mercy, and Immenſity, and Eternity; to ſee the Lord of Hoſts, the chiefeſt, the only Good; to ſee God himſelf, unvailing himſelf, and ſhining forth in all his Glory before them, yea to ſee him ſmiling, as it were, upon them, rejoycing over them, meaning himſelf as well-pleaſed with them! Who is able to conceive how much their bleſſed Souls are affected, delighted, tranſported with this bleſſed ſight? None certainly but only they that have it. They know, yea they feel it to be the greateſt, the only perfect happineſs they can poſſibly enjoy. And that all things elſe could never ſatisfie their deſires and ſo make them happy, without this: whereas this would do it without all things elſe. It being impoſſible for them to deſire any thing, but what they have in God, infinite Goodneſs it ſelf. In whom, by conſequence, all their inclinations meet as in their proper center; and ſo their Minds are always at reſt and quiet, and their Souls full as they can hold of ſolid and ſubſtantial joy, which makes them break forth continually into Praiſes and Hallelujahs to Almighty God, and to the Lamb that ſitteth upon the Throne, who purchaſed ſuch a glorious Inheritance as this is for them, and ſettled it upon them for evermore.

But how can theſe things be? How is it poſſible for the Saints in Heaven to ſee God? To that the Apoſtle anſwers in my Text, by calling it, the Inheritance of the Saints *in light*. It is true, All men are born at firſt ſpiritually blind, and ſo generally live in the dark, ſeeing no more of God or any ſpiritual object, than as if there was no ſuch thing in being. But when a man is born again, his eyes are opened, and he is *turned from darkneſs to light*, as well as from the power of Satan unto God. And therefore all ſuch are called, the *Children of light*; and *the Children of the day*; becauſe they have a *marvellous light* (as St. *Peter* calls it) conſtantly ſhining in them, whereby they diſcover many glorious things, which lye perfectly hid to all other mortals. By this *Eliſha*'s ſervant, when his eyes were opened, *ſaw the Mountain full of Horſes and Chariots of fire*, even a whole Legion of the heavenly Hoſt, round about his Maſter. By this St. *Stephen ſaw the Heavens opened, and Chriſt ſtanding at the right hand of God*; yea by this *Moſes ſaw him that is inviſible*, God himſelf. And thus all that are real Saints, being the Children of light, ſee more or leſs of God; at leaſt ſo much as to make them love, and deſire, and fear, and truſt

Act. 26. 18.
1 Theſſ. 5. 5.
1 Pet. 2. 9.
2 Reg. 6. 17.
Act. 7. 55, 56.
Heb. 11. 27.

truſt on him above all things in the world. Indeed they cannot ſee his face and live, as he himſelf told *Moſes:* But they ſee him as *Moſes* did, in his back-parts, in his works, the effects and products of his divine Perfections. And the reaſon why they cannot ſee his face and live in this world, is becauſe they are ſtill in their imperfect ſtate, and therefore cannot poſſibly have a perfect ſight of ſo glorious a being; or if they had, it would ſtrike them dead, for they could not poſſibly bear it; or as *Job* expreſſeth it, *by reaſon of his highneſs they could not endure*, ſo as to live under it. But ſeeing God himſelf ſaith, that no man ſhall ſee his face, and live; he thereby gives us to underſtand, that ſome ſhall ſee his face when they are dead, and departed out of this life. Exod. 33. 20. Job 31. 23.

And ſo queſtionleſs do all the Saints that are in Heaven. For they live in a City *which hath no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon to ſhine in it: For the glory of God doth lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof.* Or as the Prophet *Iſaiah* words it, *The Lord is to them an everlaſting light.* So that as the Sun is to us upon Earth, the fountain of all that light whereby we ſee any object here below; ſo to the Saints that are above in Heaven, God himſelf is pleaſed Rev. 21. 23. Iſa. 60. 19.

ſed to iſſue forth light immediately from himſelf, which exceeds the light of the Sun, infinitely more than that exceeds the glimmering of a Glo-worm. Neither doth it only ſhine, as the Sun doth, upon them, but into them, and ſo enlightens themſelves too, as well as all things that are about them. And what is there in the world which they cannot ſee by ſuch a glorious, ſuch an infinite light as this is? By this light they ſee not only the ſuperficies, but the very ſubſtance and contexture of every creature they have a mind to look upon, as exactly as if it was perfectly anatomized and laid open before them. By this, they ſee the ſeveral vertues, qualities, and operations of things here below, and the great ends and purpoſes for which they are deſigned. By this, they ſee the cauſes of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, and other great Phœnomena of nature, which ſo much puzzle Philoſophy, and make it but a meer conjecture. By this, they ſee the ſecret and wonderfull Powers that God hath put into all Animals and Vegetables, of propagating their reſpective Species, ſo that none of them ever did, or can ever fail to be in the world. By this, they ſee both the compoſition and the ſeveral

motions

motions of the Sun and all the other Planets, as well as fixed Stars, and what influences they have upon terreſtrial bodies. By this, they ſee the wiſe eſtabliſhment of ſecond Cauſes, how they depend upon one another, and all upon the firſt. The ſight of which, and ſuch-like things, muſt needs be an extraordinary pleaſure to them; by reaſon of the moſt admirable Art and Contrivance they obſerve in them; and alſo becauſe their faculties are by this means employed to the proper uſes, for which they were made, and to which they therefore tend. For as God made all things for the manifeſtation of his own glory, he endued men with reaſon on purpoſe, that they might behold and admire the glory of thoſe Perfections, which he manifeſted in them. And hence it is, that (all things naturally tending to their end) all men naturally deſire to know, and many apply their minds wholly to find out ſuch things as thoſe are. And if they can but gueſs at any of them with the leaſt ſhew of reaſon, or ſo much as probability, they are mightily pleaſed with it. But what a pleaſure then muſt it be, to have a full view and proſpect of them, and of that infinite Wiſedom, Power, and Goodneſs which appeareth in them,

them, as the Saints in Heaven have, by that light which ſhines upon their inheritance?

Moreover, by this light they look back upon their former lives, and ſee the ſteady hand of providence ordering and over-ruling, not only the greater occurrences, but even the leaſt circumſtances in them; and the holy Spirit of God making ſome uſe or other of every one of them, to work them over to himſelf. By this, they ſee God's infinite love and goodneſs to his Church militant here on earth, in all the ſtraits and difficulties he brings it into, and how good and neceſſary it is for it, that every thing ſhould be juſt as it is.

By this, they ſee the holy Angels and all their fellow Citizens in the new *Hieruſalem*, and converſe familiarly with them, as we do with one another. By this, they ſee their ever bleſſed Saviour, the eternal Son of God in their nature exalted at the right hand of the Father, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in Heaven or Earth. By this, they ſee all the glory which the Father hath given him, as he himſelf once prayed they might. Yea by this they ſee the moſt high God face to face, even as we ſee the Sun, by his own light: and

Joh. 17. 24.

and that too, as clearly, as fully, as perfectly as it is poſſible for creatures to doe it. Which ſo refreſhes, enlivens, elevates, and cheers their Spirits, that they are always rejoycing and ſinging, and praiſing God; admiring, adoring, magnifying and giving thanks to his almighty, all-glorious, and all-gracious Majeſty, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, for his creating, redeeming, and ſanctifying them ſo as to bring them through the various changes and chances of this mortal life, to ſuch an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens, in glory, in bliſs, in light it ſelf.

And now we are got upon the Mount, how well may we ſay with the Apoſtles, *It is good for us to be here:* Let us ſet up our Tents, and dwell continually upon the Contemplation of this glorious inheritance of the Saints in light! But alas! how far as yet are we diſtant from it? how unworthy of it? how unmeet for it? What a deal of work have we to do, before we can get thither? But, bleſſed be God, we are in the ready way, living in ſuch a Church wherein we have all things that can be deſired in order to it. Let us not then deſpair, but uſe the utmoſt of our care and ſtudy to Matt. 17. 4.

qualifie our ſelves aright for it, and we cannot miſs of it.

For which purpoſe therefore let us conſider in the next place, how we may be rightly qualified, or, as the Apoſtle here ſpeaks, *made meet* to be partakers of this inheritance of the Saints in light?

Where we may obſerve by the way, that the Apoſtle here ſuppoſeth, or rather takes it for granted, that all men are not meet for it. Than which nothing can be more certain. None being meet to partake of the inheritance of the Saints, but only they who are Saints themſelves God himſelf hath excluded all others from it, by his eternal and irrevocable decree, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* And indeed, none but Saints are ſubjects capable of it. For all others being ſtill in their natural and ſinfull eſtate, their minds are ſo ſtuffed with vitious and groſs humours, that they cannot ſee the light; and ſo wholly inclined and bent upon ſenſual objects, that they can take no pleaſure in the joys of Heaven. But rather being altogether unclean and carnal, they have an utter averſion, if not an antipathy, againſt ſuch pure and ſpiritual delights, as being directly contrary

Heb. 12. 14.

to

to their corrupt nature. Inſomuch that Heaven it ſelf would ſeem more like Hell than Heaven to them. The place would ſeem melancholly, the company irkſome, the work tedious, the light troubleſome, every thing uneaſie and diſagreeable.

As ſuppoſe it ſhould pleaſe Almighty God to take us all up immediately from this place into the higheſt Heavens, and there ſet us all juſt at our Saviour's elbow. All ſuch who are real Saints among us, who love God above all things, how glad would they be to ſee him they love? to ſee their Saviour ſhining in all his glory? How ſuddenly would they ſtrike up with the Choir of Heaven in ſinging forth the praiſes of him that brought them thither? What infinite pleaſure would they take in the place, the work, the company, and every thing they ſee there? But as for others, who are ſtill in their ſins, and mind only earthly things, how ſad and diſconſolate would they be? they would wonder to ſee the Saints ſo pleaſant and joyfull; for as for their parts, they can ſee nothing there, which they care for. In the midſt of light, they would be ſtill in darkneſs: In ſorrow, in the midſt of joys. They cannot hear that heavenly muſick; or if they did, it

would ſound harſh, all diſcords to them. They cannot taſt of thoſe ſpiritual dainties; or if they did, they could not reliſh, nor find any ſweetneſs in them. They cannot ſee the face of God; or if they did, they would not be pleaſed, but terrified and confounded at it; and wiſh with all their ſouls to be out of that ſad place again, that they might mind the buſineſs, and enjoy the pleaſures they like better. If that be Heaven, they never deſire to come there any more. And all becauſe they want that principle of true grace and holineſs, which ſhould make them Saints, and ſo capacitate them for the enjoyment of thoſe holy pleaſures, without which a blind man may as well delight in Pictures, the deaf in Muſick, yea a brute beaſt in Metaphyſicks, as they in Heaven or in God himſelf.

By this therefore we may ſee how neceſſary it is to be holy before we can be happy; pure in heart, before we can ſee God; real and true Saints, before we can partake of their inheritance in light. And by conſequence, as ever we deſire to go to Heaven when we dye, we muſt take care while we live, to get our Hearts purged from all corrupt affections, our Minds enlightened, and our Souls ſanctified through-

throughout, and inclined wholly unto God, ſo as to prefer him at leaſt in ſome degree before all things elſe; that ſo we may go out of this world, rightly diſpoſed and fitted to behold the light of his countenance, and to ſolace our ſelves in it, as the higheſt object of our Souls deſires. And then we may be ſure that our deſires ſhall be fully ſatisfied: For our Souls will be no ſooner looſned from our Bodies, but they will be immediately carried up to Heaven, and there partake of the inheritance of the Saints in light. And at the laſt day, our bodies ſhall be united to our ſouls again, and then both in ſoul and body, we ſhall enjoy all we can deſire for evermore.

But who is ſufficient for theſe things? How can we who were born, and have lived ſo long in Sin, ever be made ſo pure and holy, as to be meet to live with Saints and Angels, with Chriſt and God himſelf in the world to come? It is, I confeſs, no eaſie matter: but howſoever it is poſſible for every one here preſent to be ſo. Nay more than that, none of us can fail of it, unleſs we be failing to our ſelves in our endeavours after it. As we may eaſily perceive, if we do but

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conſider how others have been; and ſo how we our ſelves may be ſanctified or made Saints, if we do but ſet our ſelves in good earneſt about it.

For which end, we may obſerve, that this being too great a work for us to do by our own ſtrength, the eternal Son of God himſelf was pleaſed to undertake it for us. And for that purpoſe, having taken our nature upon him, he gave himſelf for us, as to redeem us from all iniquity, ſo *to purifie to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Tit. 2 14.

And ſo he is made unto us, *Wiſedom* as well as *Righteouſneſs*; *Sanctification* as well as *Redemption*; that as we are juſtified and redeemed from our ſins, ſo we may be made wiſe and holy through him; who is the fountain as of all the good things we do or can enjoy, ſo likewiſe of all the goodneſs and vertue we are or can be endued with. It all flows from him; who therefore tells us, that *without him we can do nothing.* But by him, there is nothing but we can do. As St. *Paul* found by experience, ſaying, *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.*

1 Cor. 1. 30.

Joh. 15. 5.

Phil. 4. 13.

Hence

Hence therefore if we desire to be made holy, we must apply our selves to Christ, who although he be now in Heaven as to his Humane Nature, yet he is always present with us here below, both in his Divine Person, and also by his Holy Spirit, and so is ready upon all occasions to assist us in our endeavours after piety, and to crown them with that success, as to make us sincerely pious. For which purpose, as he sanctified our humane nature in general by assuming it into his divine person; so he sanctifieth our humane persons in particular, by making us partakers of his divine nature: which he doth, by sending his Holy Spirit, of the same divine nature with himself, into our Hearts, which by degrees makes us also holy and spiritual, and so in our capacities, like unto himself, and partakers of his own nature.

Now the great thing which he requires of us, in order to his doing this great work for us, is, that we believe in him. For he himself saith, that we are *sanctified by faith that is in him.* Not by believing only his Gospel in general to be true, but by believing particularly in himself, so as to have a sure trust and confidence on him, to give us such illuminati- Act. 26. 18.

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ons and assistances of his Holy Spirit, whereby we may be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and so be made sincerely, as he is infinitely pure and holy. And indeed this is the first and great thing that we ought to believe and trust in our Saviour for: and that which is the foundation of all our other expectations from him. For we have no ground to expect either pardon or any other blessing at his hands, untill we repent and be converted But if we firmly believe and depend upon him in the first place for grace to repent and turn to God, and so to become holy and new creatures, according to the promises that he hath made us to that purpose; as he will then most certainly perform such promises to us, so all the other blessings that he hath purchased for us, will then follow in course. For if we be truly sanctified and made holy, then our sins will be all pardoned, our persons justified, our duties accepted, God reconciled to us, and at length our Souls eternally saved. But all these things depend upon our being first sanctified by him, as that doth upon our believing in him.

But

But Faith, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *is the Gift of God*; and therefore if we deſire to believe ſo as to be ſanctified, we muſt ask and expect it from him, in the uſe of thoſe means which he hath appointed both for the begetting and increaſing of it. We muſt reade, and hear, and meditate upon his Holy Word. We muſt faſt and pray, and receive the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper. For theſe are the ordinary means which God hath eſtabliſhed in his Church, whereby to make known himſelf unto us, to convince us of the truth and certainty of his Promiſes, and ſo work and confirm in us a true belief of them, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, which for that purpoſe doth continually aſſiſt and influence the adminiſtration and performance of ſuch duties; which therefore are not onely holy duties in themſelves, but the means too whereby we may become holy. Ephes. 2. 8.

But for that purpoſe, we muſt perform, not onely one or more, but all of them, ſo as to go through the whole courſe that God hath preſcribed for the healing of our ſpiritual diſtempers, and for the reſtoring us to a ſound frame and conſtitution of mind, wherein, as I have ſhewn, the nature of true holineſs properly conſiſts.

And that we muſt doe too, not onely now and then, but through the whole courſe of our lives, ſo as to be conſtantly, as much as poſſibly we can, employed in ſome or other of theſe holy exerciſes; not in a careleſs and ſuperficial manner, but heartily, ſincerely, earneſtly, as for our lives; for our lives, our eternal lives in a great meaſure depend upon it. For it is by our continual exerciſe of thoſe holy duties and the Grace of God always accompanying of them, that our hearts are inſenſibly taken off from ſin and the world, and raiſed up higher and higher towards God and Heaven, till at length our whole Souls being ſanctified by a quick and lively Faith in Chriſt, we are *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.*

And what cauſe have they who are ſo, to give thanks, as St. *Paul* here doth, to God the Father for it? For the whole of our Salvation from firſt to laſt, muſt be aſcribed unto him. It is begun, continued, and ended all in him.

Joh. 3. 16. For it was he, *who ſo loved the world, that he gave his onely begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting*

Rom. 8. 32. *life.* It was he, *who ſpared not this his Son, but delivered him up* to be tempted, to be ſcourged, to be ſpit upon, to be arraigned, condemned, crucified,

crucified, and all for us and for our Salvation. It was he, who *having raiſed up this his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs us, by turning every one of us from his iniquities.* Act. 3. 26. *And made him who knew no ſin, to be ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. It was he, *who hath exalted him with his own right hand, to be both a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins.* Act. 5. 31. It is he, who hath paſſed by the greateſt part of mankind, and hath revealed himſelf and his Son to us, the unworthieſt of all his creatures. It was he, who cauſed us to be born and bred within the Pale of his Holy Catholick Church, and in one of the ſoundeſt and pureſt parts of it upon the face of the whole Earth. It is he, who ſtill continues the means of grace to us, and us to them, and his bleſſing both to them and us. It is he, who gives us his holy ſpirit, to mortifie the deeds of the fleſh, and to quicken us with newneſs of life; to raiſe up our minds from the world, and fix them upon himſelf; to keep us from evil, and to enable us to doe, or ſuffer any thing we can for his ſake. It is he, who calls upon us continually by the miniſtery of his Word, to repent and believe the Goſpel, and gives us grace to doe it. In a word, It is he, who hath

hath ſent me, the unworthieſt of all his miniſters, at this time to acquaint you in his Name, how ye may be *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*; and it is he alone can make you ſo.

And therefore all who are ſo made, may well join with the Choire of Heaven, in thoſe Seraphick Anthems we find them ſinging in the *Revelations*, *Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. Amen; Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſedom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

Revel. 7. 10, 12.

FINIS.